

## **ABSTRACT OF THE INVENTION**

A remote ordering system particularly suited to mobile customers placing remote orders with any one of a group of affiliated merchants for pick up by the customer at a specific merchant location. The system includes a database or store information directory that contains information characterizing order-processing features for each location. The information is preferably organized according to a schema corresponding to the organizational structure of the group of merchants. The information may include order fulfillment capability, menus, prices, payment features, taxes, security protocols and system administration privileges specific to each merchant location or sub-groups of merchant locations. The system of the invention allows the remote ordering system to effectively pre-clear, pre-process and pre-pay remote orders and to effect post-sale settlement and reporting according to guidelines applicable to each specific location in the merchant group, leaving the specific location to complete only the actual order fulfillment.